Consent Information - Dental Checkup

1. **What is a dental checkup?**
   A dental checkup is where a dentist, oral health therapist or dental therapist looks at your teeth, gums, lips, tongue and saliva to see if they are healthy.

2. **Why should you have a dental checkup?**
   Dental checkups are important to look at the health of your mouth, find existing problems and discuss planned treatments. Steps to minimise further problems can also be explained. Good oral health is important to general health and well being. Better oral health can lead to better general health.

3. **What happens at a dental checkup?**
   During a dental checkup the dentist, oral health therapist or dental therapist will assess and record information relating to your general and dental health. This may include:
   - **Medical/Dental History:** a complete medical and dental history, including current medications, allergies and previous treatments and conditions will be recorded.
   - **Check teeth, gums, lips, tongue and saliva:** the dentist or therapist will look for tooth decay, bleeding gums and pockets, how the teeth fit together, and any other irregularities. Previous dental treatment will be checked and recorded.
   - **X-rays:** dental x-rays may be taken to help find such things as tooth decay, infections, tumours, teeth that have not come through the gum and damage to jaw bones.
   - **Preventive care:** may involve the use of fluoride, polishing of filings, cleaning of teeth and advice on how to care for your teeth and gums.

4. **What is a treatment plan?**
   A treatment plan will provide information about your treatment options, the risks and benefits of any treatment and information relating to care after treatment. You are invited to ask questions about your dental health and treatment needs.

5. **What are the risks and complications of a dental checkup?**
   There are no common risks associated with a dental checkup.

6. **How do I keep my teeth healthy?**
   - Eat well balanced, healthy meals. Limit snacking between meals and consumption of sugary and acidic foods and drinks.
   - Clean teeth thoroughly twice a day with a soft toothbrush using fluoride toothpaste. Spit out excess toothpaste after brushing but do not rinse.
   - Drink lots of water, taking frequent sips throughout the day.
   - Chew sugar-free gum to increase saliva flow.
   - Quit smoking to improve oral and general health.
   - Have regular dental checkups.

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**Consent Information – Dental X-rays**

1. **What is a dental x-ray?**
   Dental x-rays are images of the bones, teeth and surrounding soft tissues in your mouth. X-rays are used by your dental team to aid in diagnosis and treatment planning.

2. **Why are dental x-rays needed?**
   Your dental team can look at the health of your teeth, mouth and jaw with an x-ray. Dental x-rays show tooth decay, fractures of the teeth, bone loss, infections inside the tooth or bone and the position of any teeth under the gum. They can also reveal other abnormalities such as cysts, tumours and cancers.

3. **What are the different types of dental x-rays?**
   There are two main types of x-rays:
   - **Intraoral x-rays** where the film is placed inside your mouth and the image captured.
   - **Extraoral x-rays** where the film is placed outside your mouth and the image captured.

4. **What are the risks and complications of dental x-rays?**
   Radiation is a general term that refers to energy that can travel through the environment. X-rays (medical radiation) are a type of radiation that can go through the human body. This allows it to be used for medical purposes. Other forms of radiation we come across in our daily lives are visible light, ultraviolet light, microwaves and radio waves. The amount of medical radiation used in dental x-rays is so low that there is minimal risk of any damage to the body.
   There is no evidence that a routine dental x-ray will harm an unborn baby. However, the dental team will provide a lead gown for pregnant patients. Please ensure you notify the dental team if you are pregnant or suspect you might be pregnant.
   Advances in technology have reduced the amount of medical radiation patients are exposed to when having x-rays taken. Ask your dental team if you would like more information.

5. **Important points to remember.**
   - Your dental team is licenced to take dental-rays. They have been trained to use the lowest amount of radiation on the smallest possible area of your mouth.
   - Tell your dental team if you are pregnant or suspect you might be pregnant.
   - Tell your dental team if you have had recent dental x-rays. This may avoid the need for more dental x-rays.

6. **Digital x-rays.**
   X-rays are taken and the image is sent directly to a computer. There is no need to develop the film. The technique uses less radiation and x-ray images are immediately available on the computer screen.

**Notes to talk to my dental professional about:**

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